

WKCR, Columbia's FM Outlet, Marks 21 Years of Broadcasting

By LISA HAMMEL

Columbia University's radio station WKCR has just wished itself a happy twenty-first birthday.

When the infant was born in 1941, its small voice reached no further than the college dormitories. Today the thriving adult speaks out, along with the five other college FM stations within the greater New York-New Jersey area, to audiences across state lines.

The five others are WFMU at Upsala College in East Orange, N. J.; WFUV at Fordham University; WPRB at Princeton University; WSOU, the Seaton Hall University station in South Orange, N. J., and Hofstra College's WVHC in Hempstead, L. I.

The "college sound" on the FM dial might be indistinguishable from its professional, non-commercial counterpart if it were not for the fact that the college station is able to draw on the resources of its affiliated institution.

However, most of the stations supplement their campus-originated programs with material from other radio sources.

One of the advantages of school affiliation is that it enables snagging the visiting luminary who is on campus for an address or lecture. The visitor's consent will result in his being hauled off to the broadcasting studio for a taped interview, address, panel inquiry or discussion.

Within the past year, the distinguished company of personalities on the air has included senators, jurists, poets, Government officials, scholars and scientists.

Another resource is the faculty. Instructors in many different curriculums are called upon to give lectures, participate in panel discussions, and to be interviewed or employed by any appropriate on-the-air method the student broadcasters can think of.

The tape recorder also has been brought into the classroom. WKCR, for example, has carried full semesters of courses by such Columbia University notables as Henry Steele Commager, Richard E. Neustadt and, currently, Eric Bentley. But the most durable star of the classroom series is Prof. James P. Shenton, whose course in American His-

tory has been running almost as long as "Tobacco Road."

His well-documented lectures, delivered in a fast-moving style, give him the iconoclastic sound of a veteran newspaper reporter offering the boys the lowdown on cherished American myths.

All of the stations broadcast their teams' major sporting events, particularly basketball. And many of them serve their surrounding community in some special way. Town meetings, local concerts and programs of near-by museums are some of the contributions. And most of the stations offer the pre-election oratory of local and sometimes state-wide candidates.

The student body, too, contributes to programming. Student musicians perform in live recitals, dramatic arts, students give readings, and young rhetoricians debate.

Five of the stations are non-commercially supported. One, WPRB, sells time to advertisers, but only to break even. Yet, although there are no real commercial pressures, there seems to be no attempt at creative experimentation with the medium.

Original writing is largely limited to music commentary or news essays. One administrative officer explained, "No, we don't have them do original work. After all, we do want quality programming." / /

It looks like the experimental workshop will have to wait. There will be no Mercury Theatre tomorrow night. But what there will be, in addition to the talk programs, is a good deal of good music. It is music, more than anything else—and most of it classical—that makes up the bulk of the stations' programs.

Two of the stations, WPRB and WKCR, are operated entirely by students. With the other four, administrative, technical and production supervision is provided to a greater or lesser degree by members of the faculty or professionals.

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I can be of any help at all to you. promotion, trade shows, and advertising takes nothing out of cans, but paper, ups, etc. Very Interesting and quite in anyone's book!

Regards,

John Hood

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LEHIGH UNIVERSITY
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Mr. Samuel Connor
Office of Public Information
Lehigh University
Bethlehem, Penna.

Dear Sam:

Thought the enclosed article from the Times might be of interest, especially since it points out a number of differences in the various operations.

I understand that the WLRN-FM project is well underway, and that the matters will be brought up before the Board of Trustees at their spring meeting. Of course, my best wishes for the success of the project are always to be invoked, and any help I may give to insure its fulfillment will be gladly donated.

I might add that I was quite disappointed in the program schedules I saw in a recent issue of the Brown & White. Especially of concern was the fact that, even though there are two AM outlets, neither one carries a "good music" station during non-studio hours; rather one offers WNEW's pop music, and the other WPAT's sloppy, gushy, pseudo-highbrow junk. I had thought the campus was experiencing a cultural uplift, but our radio stations do not choose to show it! (No malice intended here, just an observation!)

Again, Sam, please let me know if I can be of any help at all to you. I'm currently in charge of sales promotion, trade shows, and advertising for this division of CCC, which makes nothing out of cans, but paper, including cups, plates, vending cups, etc. Very interesting and quite profitable—a good combination in anyone's book!

Regards,

John Hood